



For Immediate Release

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VIRGINIA COMMISSION FOR THE ARTS ANNOUNCES  
POETRY OUT LOUD: NATIONAL RECITATION CONTEST  
RICHMOND REGIONAL FINALS

*Ten High school students in the Richmond metropolitan area compete in national poetry recitation contest*

Richmond, VA – The Virginia Commission for the Arts and the Library of Virginia announce the Richmond regional finals for *Poetry Out Loud: National Recitation Contest*. The competition, presented in partnership with The National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation, is part of a national program that encourages high school students to learn about great poetry through memorization, performance, and competition. Ten students from ten high schools in the Richmond metropolitan area will compete in the *Poetry Out Loud* state finals at Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

**When:** April 20, 2006 at 1:00 pm

**Where:** Library of Virginia

800 East Broad Street

Richmond, VA 23219

The event is FREE and open to the public.

**Mistress of Ceremony:** Daphne Maxwell Reid, Actress

**Judges:** David Wojahn, Director of the Creative Writing Program, Virginia Commonwealth University, Bruce Miller, Artistic Director of Theater IV/Barksdale, Natasha Tretheway, Poet and Writer in Residence at Duke Center for Documentary Studies.

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The winner will receive \$200, and the winner's school a \$500 stipend for the purchase of poetry books. One runner-up will receive \$100, with \$200 for his or her school library. The champion of the *Poetry Out Loud* Richmond Regional final will also receive an all expenses-paid trip to compete in the National Finals in Washington, DC, on May 16, 2006. The *Poetry Out Loud* National Finals will award a total of \$50,000 in scholarships and school stipends, with a \$20,000 college scholarship for the *Poetry Out Loud* National Champion.

*Poetry Out Loud* uses a pyramid structure. Beginning at the classroom level, winners advance to the school-wide competition, then to the state capital competition, and ultimately to the National Finals in Washington, DC. More than 250,000 students across the country are expected to take part in *Poetry Out Loud* this year.

At the Library of Virginia, contestants will recite works they selected from an anthology of more than 400 classic and contemporary poems. The National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation created a standards-based teacher's guide, a comprehensive website, and a CD featuring poetry recitations by well-known actors and writers such as Anthony Hopkins, Alyssa Milano, N. Scott Momaday, and Rita Dove.

"The national Poetry Out Loud competition builds on the recent resurgence of poetry as a spoken art form. The slam poetry movement and the popularity of rap music among young people demonstrate the interest in the spoken word. Poetry Out Loud will help high school students learn about great poetry, as well as mastering public speaking skills and building self-confidence," says Peggy Baggett, Executive Director of the Virginia Commission for the Arts.

### **About the National Endowment for the Arts**

This year, the National Endowment for the Arts marks its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of leadership in the arts. The NEA is a public agency dedicated to supporting excellence in the arts – both new and established – bringing the arts to all Americans, and providing leadership

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in arts education. Established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government, the Arts Endowment is the largest national funder of the arts, bringing great art to all 50 states, including rural areas, inner cities, and military bases.

### **About the Poetry Foundation**

The Poetry Foundation, publisher of *Poetry* magazine, is committed to a vigorous presence for poetry in our culture. One of the largest literary organizations in the world, it exists to discover and celebrate the best poetry and to place it before the largest possible audience. For more information, please visit [PoetryFoundation.org](http://PoetryFoundation.org).

### **About The Virginia Commission for the Arts**

The Virginia Commission for the Arts is the state agency that supports the arts through funding from the Virginia General Assembly and the National Endowment for the Arts. The Commission distributes grant awards to artists, arts and other not-for-profit organizations, educational institutions, educators and local governments, and provides technical assistance in arts management. For further information about the Commission and its programs, contact the Virginia Commission for the Arts at 804-225-3132; [arts@arts.virginia.gov](mailto:arts@arts.virginia.gov); [www.arts.virginia.gov](http://www.arts.virginia.gov)

### **About the Library of Virginia**

The Library of Virginia holds the world's most extensive collection of material about the Old Dominion and has been a steward of the commonwealth's documentary and printed heritage since 1823. It serves as the reference library at the seat of government and as the official state archival repository. The Library preserves and provides access to 99.5 million manuscripts and 1.8 million books, serials, state and federal documents, bound periodicals, microfilm reels, and newspapers documenting four centuries of Virginia history. For more information visit [www.lva.lib.va.us](http://www.lva.lib.va.us).

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS  
and  
POETRY FOUNDATION  
present

